



[About](#) | [Meetings](#) | [Bulletin](#) | [Resources](#)

[View this email in your browser](#)

ECA Update: October 5, 2016

IN THIS UPDATE:

WIPP plans will go on even if Russia quits plutonium deal

NNSA Head: 'All Bets Are Off' for Warhead Modernization Under Sequestration

Second rock fall discovered at nuclear waste site

Feds agree to delay possible nuclear waste shipments across Peace Bridge

US Wants to Build Idaho Facility for Warships' Nuclear Waste

EM officials tout D&D progress

Cange to move to DC to serve in interim DOE Environmental Management job

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 2016

6

DOE-EM Site Specific
Advisory Board
Meeting in
Piketon, OH

[More info here](#)

October 2016

11-13

Energy, Technology
and Environmental
Business
Association's Business
Opportunities

WIPP plans will go on even if Russia quits plutonium deal

Albuquerque Journal

October 3, 2016



Should the U.S. continue to hold up its end of the bargain, Russia's withdrawal from the agreement would likely have little effect on the Department of Energy's plans to send a parallel portion of plutonium – six metric tons – to New Mexico's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.

That plutonium, which is not quite weapons grade, and would be diluted and packaged

to meet disposal criteria at WIPP, is not actually part of the 34 metric tons covered by the agreement. But it is being viewed as a trial run "to establish that it's cost-effective and safe" to dilute and dispose of it at WIPP, said Ed Lyman, senior scientist at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

At Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories, the breakdown in the bilateral agreement may deal a decisive blow to already deteriorated relationships between scientists at New Mexico's national laboratories and their Russian counterparts, who had been working together to iron out the technical aspects of plutonium disposition under the deal, according to Don Hancock with the Southwest Research and Information Center in Albuquerque.

Lyman said lab-to-lab cooperation had chilled in recent years as Russia has tried to assert itself as a world power.

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NNSA Head: 'All Bets Are Off' for Warhead Modernization Under Sequestration

Defense News

Conference in
Knoxville, TN

www.eteba.org

October 2016

13

DOE-EM Business
Opportunity Forum in
Knoxville, TN

[More info here](#)

October 2016

15

DOE-EM Site Specific
Advisory Board
Meeting in
Paducah, KY

[More info here](#)

October 2016

20

October 4, 2016



WASHINGTON — If Congress does not ease budget caps for the coming fiscal year, it will be almost impossible to keep a quintet of vital nuclear warhead modernization program on track, warns the head of the National Nuclear Security Agency (NNSA).

“If the relief we got through the Bipartisan Budget Act, which eased, modestly, the caps for fiscal year ‘16 and ‘17, are not reincarnated in some form for FY18, 19 and beyond, all bets are off. I’ll say that again: all bets are off. And god forbid if sequestration rears its ugly head again, they’re doubly off,” NNSA head Frank Klotz told an audience gathered at the Minot21 Conference on Capitol Hill Sept. 22.

Concerns from arms of the military about the impact of sequestration are not new, but the NNSA is in a particularly precarious position, as they are laying the groundwork for a major re-working of the weapons that provide the core of America’s nuclear arsenal, while also facing major deferred infrastructure bills that have left some facilities literally crumbling around workers.

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Second rock fall discovered at nuclear waste site

AMI Newswire

October 5, 2016

DOE-EM Site Specific
Advisory Board
Meeting in
Paducha, KY

[More info here](#)

October 2016

26

DOE-EM Site Specific
Advisory Board
Meeting in
Pojoaque, NM

[More info here](#)

October 2016

29

DOE-LM 10th
Aniversary of Fernald
Cleanup: "Weapons to
Wetlands: A Decade of
Difference" in
Hamilton, OH

[More info here](#)

November 2016



A second rock fall has been discovered at a nuclear waste facility in New Mexico, the Department of Energy announced today.

The salt rock debris was found Monday during routine inspections of the underground cavern at the Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) near Carlsbad.

Officials say neither this incident, nor another rock fall discovered Sept. 27, pose a threat. "The rock fall does not cause any threat to the workforce or the public," a DOE spokesperson told AMI Newswire.

Both incidents occurred in areas of the facility that have not been used since 2010.

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Feds agree to delay possible nuclear waste shipments across Peace Bridge

Buffalo News

October 5, 2016



Plans by the U.S. Department of Energy that could involve trucking high-level liquid nuclear waste from Canada over the Peace Bridge are on hold until at least February.

16-18

INVITATION ONLY
2016
Intergovernmental
Meeting with DOE in
New Orleans, LA

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Court papers filed late last month show energy officials agreed to withhold shipments until after Feb. 17, 2017, “in order to ensure compliance with all legal and contractual obligations.”

The shipments could have started as early as last month under an agreement between the United States and Canada, but a federal lawsuit filed by seven environmental organizations against the Energy Department in August appears to be resulting in the delay.

“The court-agreed delay in the shipment of liquid high-level nuclear waste from Canada to the Savannah River Site is a victory for the effort demanding that DOE prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on the proposal and analyze the viable option of treating the waste in Canada,” said Tom Clements, director of the Savannah River Site Watch, which is one of the organizations suing the federal government.

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US Wants to Build Idaho Facility for Warships' Nuclear Waste

ABC News

October 3, 2016



The Navy and U.S. Department of Energy want to build a \$1.6 billion facility at a nuclear site in eastern Idaho that would handle fuel waste from the nation's fleet of nuclear-powered warships through at least 2060.

The new facility is needed to keep nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and submarines deployed, according to an environmental impact statement made public Friday. It would be built at the Energy Department's 890-square-mile site, which includes the Idaho National Laboratory, considered the nation's primary lab for nuclear research.

The government also looked at two other alternatives: continuing to use outdated facilities at the site or overhauling them. The effect to the environment would be small for all three options, the document concluded.

The federal government bringing nuclear waste into Idaho has been a touchy subject, but state officials supported the new building.

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EM officials tout D&D progress

Daily Times

October 3, 2016



At the recent National Cleanup Workshop held by the Office of Environmental Management (EM), Assistant Secretary Monica Regalbuto cited a number of EM accomplishments achieved over the past year and included the progress in deactivating and decommissioning at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant at Piketon.

Top EM officials highlighted a variety of accomplishments across the DOE cleanup program and outlined efforts underway to support EM's field sites in continued progress.

“Significant progress is being made because of the men and women hard at work, in the field, every single day at each of our sites,” Regalbuto said. “During my tenure as head of the EM program, my focus has been on providing our workers in the field with the leadership and support required for success.”

Regalbuto and EM Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Mark Whitney spoke to approximately 600 attendees at the National Cleanup Workshop, held Sept. 14-15 in Alexandria, Va. The workshop, hosted by the Energy Communities Alliance with

DOE and the Energy Facility Contractors Group serving as cooperating organizations, brought together senior DOE executives and site officials, industry executives, and other stakeholders to discuss DOE's progress on the cleanup of the environmental legacy of the nation's Manhattan Project and Cold War nuclear weapons program.

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Cange to move to DC to serve in interim DOE Environmental Management job

Oak Ridge Today

October 4, 2016



Sue Cange will be moving at least temporarily to Washington, D.C., to become interim principal deputy assistant secretary for the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management. She will be temporarily serving in the role formerly filled by Mark Whitney, who has taken a job in the private sector.

Whitney is a former manager of the Environmental Management program in Oak Ridge. He has been appointed chief operating officer of AECOM's nuclear and environment strategic business unit. He worked for DOE for 11 years and served in both the Environmental Management office and the National Nuclear Security Administration, AECOM said in a press release.

Cange is expected to move in the next few weeks, sometime in October, said Ben Williams, DOE spokesperson for the Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management.

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